



UTERINE FIBROID STUDY

NEWS

Who are the women in the Uterine Fibroid Study?

The Uterine Fibroid Study (UFS) was designed to determine the number of women with fibroids and factors that may increase a woman's risk of having fibroids. We enrolled both women who are still having periods and women who are not having periods between the age of 35-49. All the women in the study were members of the George Washington University (GWU) Medical Center Health Plan. The following is a brief report about those who participated.

	Black	White	Other Race	Unknown Race	Total
Still having periods	789	488	56	38	1,371
No periods	118	42	3	5	168
Total	907	530	59	43	1,539

We are very grateful to each one of the 1,539 women who participated in the study. We would also like to express our gratitude to all the GWU physicians and staff who helped make the study a success.

What do we know so far about fibroids?

Uterine fibroids are the leading indication for hysterectomy among women in the United States. Medical textbooks say that 25-30% of women have fibroids. The first thing we learned is that fibroids are more common than anyone realized. Over 60% of the women in our study had fibroids. Based on national hysterectomy statistics, African American women appear to be at a 3- to 9-fold higher risk than White women. We also found that more Black women had had hysterectomies for fibroids. Among the women still having periods, about 75% of Black women and about 50% of White women had evidence of uterine fibroids on sonogram exams. Even among women who had not previously been diagnosed with uterine fibroids, more Blacks than Whites had fibroids, and newly diagnosed Black women were nearly twice as likely to have large fibroids. For some unknown reason, Black women are at higher risk of uterine fibroids than White women.

What's going on with the Fibroid Study?



In April of last year, we completed data collection and closed the UFS field office at GWU. Since that time Dr. Joel Schectman, the co-principal investigator for the study, has left GWU and joined the staff at CIGNA Health Plan. He is still committed to the Uterine Fibroid Study and continues to lend support. We are currently preparing all the information UFS women contributed for data analyses. One factor we are interested in studying with fibroids is stress. Stress has been shown to be related to certain health problems. Many of you answered several stress-related questions in the written questionnaire you sent us. However, we needed more information from the Black women in the study. The stress information we collected ignored the stressful experiences of just being "black" in this color-conscious society. Therefore, we asked a sample of Black women to complete a 20-minute telephone interview about their perceptions of racism. We hope that this information will help us learn more about why Black women have a higher rate of fibroids than White women. This special data collection effort was completed last fall. If you received a letter and we did not reach you, please call us at our toll-free number 1-800-948-7552 ext. 127.

Keep in touch with us

We want to keep you informed about the findings from the UTERINE FIBROID STUDY, but we need your help! If you have moved or changed your telephone number, please call us at our toll-free number, 1-800-948-7552 extension 127.

Thanks for your help!!

Enrollment and data collection for this study has been very successful! Thank you all for all your efforts. Susie, Tessie and Glenn have been calling some of you back to clarify some of your answers. Special thanks to you all for helping us further. We are so excited about soon being able to address some of the many questions we have had about fibroids. For example, why are women in their 40s at such high risk of fibroids? Does it have anything to do with pregnancy and lactation history? Prior use of birth control pills? Stress? The start of menopause? We will send you results when we have some answers so please let us know of your addresses.

Focus

The Uterine Fibroid Study said farewell to one of our dedicated and hardworking women, Regina Davis. Regina, field study supervisor, who graciously met every woman at the clinic, recently graduated from The George Washington University as a Master of Public Health in Maternal and Child Health. She is currently working in Washington, DC in the Department of Health and Human Services Office of Women's Health. We asked Regina to briefly share her feelings about having worked on the Uterine Fibroid Study.



"My experience was both rewarding and informative. I feel proud to have been personally involved with a project that is going to improve the quality of life and advance the health of women."

Regina Davis

DO YOU HAVE A BILL FOR US?

If you received a bill from GWU Medical Center for a sonogram you had done as part of the Uterine Fibroid Study, please call us at 1-800-948-7552 ext. 127.

BOOKS ABOUT FIBROIDS/HYSTERECTOMY:

1. Hutchins, Francis L. JFMD. The Fibroid Book: Every Woman's Guide to Taking Charge, Diagnosing, and Treating the Most Common Cause of Hysterectomy.
2. Stringer Nelson H., Tanya Leonello (illustrator). Uterine Fibroids: What Every Woman Needs to Know. 1997.
3. Bernstein, Steven. Hysterectomy: A Review of the Literature on Indications, Effectiveness and Risks. 1998.
4. Williams, Wanda Wigfall. Hysterectomy: Learning Facts, Coping with the Feelings, Facing the Future. 1986.
5. Dennerstein, Lorraine, Wood C, Westmore Ann. Hysterectomy: New Options and Advances. 1995.
6. Northrup, Christiane MD. Women's Bodies, Women's Wisdom Creating Physical and Emotional Health and Healing. Bantam: New York, 1994.
7. Our Bodies, Ourselves For the New Century. Boston Women's Health Book. Collective. Simon and Schuster: New York, 1998.

— Why Study Uterine Fibroids? —

Uterine fibroids cause major health problems for women. Over 200,000 women have surgery on their uterus for fibroids every year in this country. We need to know more.

Donna D. Baird, Ph.D.

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